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we can gain time and energy to acquire some more systematic information about the structure and functioning of the universe. Philosophy may then hope to become, what we fear it is now only to a slight extent, a fixed body of doctrine which will command the respect of all who desire to acquire knowledge.

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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

The Concept Action in History and in the Natural Sciences. PERCY HUGHES. *Columbia University Contributions to Philosophy, Psychology and Education*, Vol. X., No. 3. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1905.

With the exception of the presidential address of Professor Münsterberg, delivered some years ago before the American Philosophical Society, this monograph of Dr. Hughes is the first serious contribution of American scholarship to a discussion that is looked upon by many of the guild of philosophers across the water as one of the most important in the whole history of logic. A group of German thinkers has arisen who deny that the natural science method is the only method that may be legitimately employed in the search for truth, who emphasize the 'antithesis between history and the natural sciences' and who believe that they have laid the foundations of the logic of the historical sciences. Professor Rickert has given the most comprehensive account of this logic. It is, as he teaches, the logic of individuals as opposed to the logic of universals.

Dr. Hughes is in sympathy with the work of the Germans. He does not deny the antithesis between history and the natural sciences, but would set it out along lines that seem to him 'more clear, at least to English-speaking people, than those adhered to by German logicians.' In 'the common word and concept *action*,' he believes that he has found 'an instrument of speech and logic to which no German term, in its common use, is equal for this particular purpose.' Rickert, according to Dr. Hughes, "in asserting the bald antithesis of the sciences of *individuals* and of *universals*, fails to grasp the wealth and positive character of the historian's work, or really to unite under one concept the full purpose of historical as contrasted with naturalistic construction. My thesis is that to describe the content and purpose of historical construction, the concept *action* is fully adequate. . . . *Action*, then, as contrasted with *law* is to be the central theme of this essay."

In his first chapter, Dr. Hughes traces rapidly the history of the theories of the nature of history from Aristotle to Rickert, noting that before Kant, who 'laid down the general principles of historical as contrasted with mechanical or natural science,' philosophers failed to grasp the logical character of the historian's work. Droysen's contribution to the discussion he ranks very high, but criticizes him because he 'wrongly marks off the moral world from histories in general, as history's peculiar

field,' and second, because 'he keeps in the background the essential feature that gave unity to his treatment, the fact that history deals with objects as determined from within by latent tendencies, with activity, with agencies and actions, not with objects void of character, determined by circumstances, by their relations, not with passivity, not with atoms and motion.' In presenting his own theory as a development of the preceding, Dr. Hughes contends that 'the content of any history is fundamentally that *action* which characterizes the one agent, and in which the lesser agents appear as members of that one agent. The actions of those lesser agents are histories, and together make up the one action and the one history.' This concept action covers all past events, of which there is a record, denotes the freedom that characterizes the objects of history and the relation between the elements of any given history in which the activity of those elements is not only conserved but increased. It indicates the purpose and point of the historical scientist in his construction, and finally, it permits the temporal character that common usage gives to history and the inclusion of mechanical relations between the several elements, subordinated to the teleological relation which the history aims to present.

Dr. Hughes objects to Rickert's statement that 'history is nearer reality than natural science' and observes, "They both are real if truly science." Going on, he asserts that "the natural sciences in all cases *start from* a history, whether it be an observation or an experiment, for the fact from which the naturalist starts and to which he returns is a *past*, of which there remains only the evidence. The naturalist starts by employing historical concepts, inner causes, potentialities, and do what he may, never escapes from them wholly. The direction of the naturalist's effort is to refer all events to the motion of the thing as conditioned by the 'totality of circumstances'—a reference that reduces the thing to a condition of passivity relative to the immeasurable totality." "The physicist starts with simple histories, *e. g.*, the fall of a ball through different distances; and, noticing resemblances and differences between these past processes, these histories, finds a law which applies to all such histories, whenever they shall have occurred. . . . On the other hand, histories direct the common perception of man to the existence of agents and actions greater than it knew, presenting us with beings of greater and greater complexity and internal significance. It seeks the unity of action of a nebula or of the Milky Way."

The historian "can not run counter to universal law. . . . If he would write the history of the earth, of a man or of a nation, his account must be confirmed by its accordance with the laws of geology, sociology or of psychology, etc." "Such manifold interrelations, such interdependence and supplementation of each other's labors, exist, I would show, between historical and natural science, rather than the neat but barren antithesis between sciences of the universal and the individual, of the abstract and the real. A further advantage of characterizing action rather than individuality as the concept of history is that in the former not only is individuality included, but also the temporal, developing, continuous char-

acter of historical content, the peculiar character of historical causation, the teleological character of historical construction and the practical purpose of historical study are implied. That one term, action, in anti-thesis to law, thoroughly distinguishes the field and purpose of history from that of natural science."

In his second chapter Dr. Hughes deals with historical *invention*, seeking to show that the content of a history is action; in the third chapter he treats of historical *construction* and would demonstrate that 'in this construction the concept governing the historian *must be action*.'

After presenting action as the content of histories and the concept governing historical construction, in his fourth and fifth chapters, he turns to mechanics, chemistry and biology and shows that although they start with histories, they work away from and tend to eliminate action from the scientific concepts employed. While this is practically accomplished in mechanics, it becomes impossible as we pass into the region of the more complex sciences, like chemistry and biology, whose laws have a limited range.

In a sixth chapter a scheme of the concepts that have been employed is given, and in a concluding chapter the relation between history and ethics, the dependence of ethical on historical construction, is briefly but suggestively touched upon.

I realize that this analysis of Dr. Hughes's monograph is very inadequate, that much has been omitted that should have been included to make clear his position, especially the distinction between *possibility* and *tendency* that plays such an important part in his argument.

Before touching on his position as whole, I wish to say just a word about the manner in which Dr. Hughes employs the two terms 'histories' and 'evidence.' Everything that has happened is history, he tells us. That is, to be sure, the first use of the term and the vulgar use. The scientific use, however, suggests, not isolated past events, but important past events organized into a complex and unique whole. I am thoroughly convinced that we shall never reach daylight in the discussion of the relation of history to the natural sciences until we substitute some word for that first term. All past acts are no more history than they are natural science; they are simply the material with which both sciences work. This is Rickert's position, and the work of the historian and of the sociologist seems to me to bear him out. When Dr. Hughes takes exception to Rickert's statement that historical science is closer to the reality than natural science, he does not discuss his grounds for that statement, namely, that the external world is known to us through perception, that historical science tends to retain the perceivable, while natural science tends to eliminate it. Both history and natural science start with perceivable objects, but all perceivable objects are not history nor are they natural science.

The use of the word evidence as meaning 'the present fact' is a use that must strike the historian as incomplete. Evidence is a rather definite thing for the historian and a logic of history ought to conform to scientific practise. It is true that all the 'sources' with which the his-

torian works are present facts, but for the most part Dr. Hughes uses the term in a very limited sense, meaning the existence of a constitution, of a state, of a political party or of a religion whose existence needs to be explained. Such a fact, undoubtedly, is proof of action, but it is not the evidence that enables us to trace the stages of the action, its evolution or history.

As to Dr. Hughes's general position, I can speak with less confidence. Unquestionably action is the content of history. Not only do all historical works prove it, but writers upon method betray it often in their use of terms. It is also true, I believe, that the historian seeks for unity, that a history should present a single action, but is *action* a necessary antithesis of *generalization* (law)? It is not possible to generalize upon actions, to have a law of actions? In that case how would the content of histories differ from the content of sociologies, unless that difference rested on the individuality, *i. e.*, uniqueness and unity of the historical act? Does history merge almost imperceptibly into natural science?

For Dr. Hughes, history does not have humanity for its center. For him the content of history is not necessarily *Kultur*, the result of man's activities in society, and it would be quite possible to have a history with man left out. Rickert holds that humanity is the center and *Kultur* the content of all history. It may be possible to reconcile these views. Bernheim remarked long ago that 'wir können alle Objecte historisch betrachten,' but that only man in society was the natural object of *Geschichtswissenschaft*. The distinction here is based upon content and not upon method, and it might reasonably be insisted that an account of the unique evolution of the earth is, from the point of view of method, as much a part of historical science as the unique evolution of man in society. If this be true, will it not be necessary to invent new terms to distinguish the action of man in society from the action of the planets? Will distinctions not become necessary in historical science not unlike those that have arisen in natural science between biology and sociology? If so, what would be the foundation of such distinctions? Here an examination of Gottl's interesting study would be valuable. These observations call attention to the incompleteness rather than to the unsoundness of the work of Dr. Hughes, and as he expressly denies all claims to completeness, does not form a fair ground for criticism.

Finally, I am not convinced that the word action will do all that Dr. Hughes claims for it as the concept of historical construction. All actions are unique, but the historian is interested in the action that is important because of its uniqueness or individuality. Important, be it understood, not in its isolation, but in its relation to a larger whole, and important for that larger whole by just those characteristics that distinguish it from other acts. The sociologist in dealing with past acts is concerned with what they have in common and neglects the features that the historian seizes upon. Both deal with action, but in the one case the action is general, common to several series, in the other it is unique, happens but once, can not happen again, and is valuable on account of its individuality. If a generalization on social evolution may have action

for its content, *i. e.*, if laws of social action may be formulated—and I can see nothing to prevent such formulation—it must be evident that the term *action* does not supply us with a formal concept by which we can distinguish the work of the historian from that of the sociologist. The only escape, it appears to me, would be to decline to classify sociology with the sciences of generalization or of law.

While it does not appear to me that Dr. Hughes has found in the word *action* a term that is the clear antithesis of *law* and sums up the work of the historian as the latter term does the work of the natural scientist, it is still true that he gives us a valuable new point of view, in distinguishing between *possibility* and *tendency*, in pointing out clearly for the first time that action is the content of history and that the synthesis must be characterized by unity of action. From such a brilliant beginning we may reasonably hope that he will give us in the future a treatise on the logic of history that will be complete, dealing with all the problems for which he could not find space in his thesis, and especially with the relation of history to sociology.

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Faith, Reason and Religion. F. C. S. SCHILLER. *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. IV., No. 2, 1906. Pp. 329–345.

The growing influence of the will-to-believe philosophy suggests the need of a careful estimate of its bearings upon the problems of religion and theology. From the standpoint of its critics, the new humanism may be viewed as the foe of a reasonable faith and the possible ally of the most extreme obscurantism or superstition, or as an excuse for the most unbridled subjectivism. Mr. Schiller, in dealing with the relations of faith and reason, seeks to meet these objections and to show that the new view does not mean the systematic demolition of the reason. Faith can not be regarded as antagonistic to reason, because faith is necessarily involved in the exercise of reason itself. As a name for intellectual indolence or complacency, faith may be the foe of reason, but with faith in the proper sense, that is, with the attitude which takes a desirable belief on trust and acts upon it in the hope of verifying it by action, reason can have no quarrel. The truths of reason were originally postulates assumed to meet a certain situation, and only established *ex post facto* by the experience of their practical success. Further, the faith which engenders knowledge is not a principle of unbridled individualism, for before it can be accepted as knowledge it must prove itself by works and interfere effectively in the conduct of life. While the sifting process is going on no final agreement in religious belief is to be looked for, and it may even be questioned whether there is an ultimate truth, the same for all. The plurality of opinions suggests that truth may ‘prove more subtly flexible and adjust itself to the differences of individual experiences.’ Both science and religion begin with postulates of faith, and transmute them through the verification of experience into axioms of reason. Theology has lagged behind science in its development, but the